

Revisionism and the Power of Truth

A Comment

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Richard Widmann has followed Robert Faurisson in warning that the immediate future for historical revisionists, especially those addressing the currently accepted and widely promoted view of ‘the Holocaust’, looks very bleak. [\[1\]](#)

He has correctly observed that the world has already seen a wide range of modes of persecution inflicted on revisionists: censorship, imprisonment, intimidation, deportation, loss of employment, threats against one’s life or family, ritual defamation, excommunication from polite society (or marginalization), book burning, accusations about ‘group libel’, and legislation against ‘hate speech’ or ‘racial vilification’.

Moreover he notes that ‘even more draconian laws’ and other weapons may soon be deployed: state-organized monitoring of dissenters, disconnection of them from the Internet and their deprivation of access to credit card use.

Just at the end of his essay Widmann qualifies his pessimistic vision by stating that “the seeds of the destruction of the forthcoming system have already been planted.” He appears to mean by this that there is an ultimately self-defeating absurdity in the behavior, including the propositional claims, of the new oppressors. George Orwell dramatized this all-too-human political tendency in his novel *Nineteen Eighty-four*, whereby, for example, the Ministry of Peace planned war and the Ministry of Plenty organized rationing. He also showed that absurdity, when backed by tyranny and terror, is not easily overthrown. Indeed, the novel’s thesis is defeatist – reflecting, perhaps, the author’s own unbelief and consequent psychological weakness.

Perhaps, by contrast, we should invoke General Franco’s famous slogan for the Nationalist campaign between 1936 and 1939 against the would-be communizers and bolshevizers of Catholic Christian Spain: “Blind faith in victory!” Franco had that faith; he was able to infuse it into his troops and many other Spaniards; and he won the titanic struggle.

Those who would suppress historical revisionism, and Holocaust revisionism in particular, have a deadly enemy which they cannot defeat and which, in their heart of hearts, they know to be invulnerable: truth.

Truth is something much more than propositional correctness. It is something which exists above and beyond and within all forms and all words, though it can inform these and, as it were, shine through them. Not only is truth a living power, as the Biblical gospels, among other sacred documents, attest, but it is a heavenly power, not merely an earthly power. That is to say, it comes from a part of the universe that, mysteriously, is superior to that part of it which (in gospel terms) is ‘earth’, the arena of our daily human activities and level of, or kind of, consciousness and understanding.

Ultimately truth is, for mankind, a source of well-being that is greater in importance even than oxygen, water, food, impressions. Life without truth is, quite simply, hell.

For this reason, within individual persons, in very varying degrees (of course) the inmost heart or soul rebels against untruth or attempts to stifle truth, no matter what the particular context of the attack may be. And some persons, in every age, as history testifies, have found the inner fortitude to prefer pain and death to the desecration at their own hands of truth.

In this reality lives the truth and the power of the Russian proverb that Alexandr Solzhenitsyn quoted in his 1970 Nobel Prize lecture: "One word of truth outweighs the world."^[2] At the time he wrote those words Russia was in the grip of communist totalitarianism. Within two decades that tyranny had been broken.

Persons who are confident that their view of a matter is in accord with, and thus informed by, truth do not need to persecute those who disagree with them. By contrast, those who seek to stifle a particular thesis or viewpoint about religion, philosophy, art, science or politics, at once show that, deep within, they lack that confidence. Indeed, some of them may know very well indeed that they are agitating to protect the lie. Human corruption, alas, often goes as far as that.

Truth, in its essence, is a manifestation of the divine. That this is so is told by sacred texts in all the world's traditions. One simple testimony to it in the Christian Bible is Christ's statement: "I have overcome the world."^[3] By contrast, Pontius Pilate represents all doubters and skeptics when he asks: "What is truth?" and does not, as Francis Bacon noted, wait for an answer.^[4]



In response to Jesus's statement that the reason He was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth, Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor of Judaea retorts, "What is truth?" (Jn 18:38)
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The famous story of 'The Emperor with No Clothes' implicitly suggests that sooner or later a child (that is, a person uncorrupted and innocent, or a person able to see things in a new way) will bring to an end any context of deceit and suppression by exposing its manifest absurdity. At the present time the French comedian Dieudonne M'Bala M'Bala appears to be doing just this in Paris, leading to the heightening of absurdity with French President Francois Hollande and interior Minister, Manuel Valls, publicly declaring that the government must close this trickster down. The French have a long history of comic resistance to tyranny and bureaucracy. The novelist Charles Morgan (1894-1958) utilized this tradition in his masterpiece, *The Voyage*^[5], in which his hero, the 'holy fool' Barbet Hazard, takes Paris by storm with his theatrical parodies and satirical songs addressing the vices of the times. A government close down a popular comedian? How better can one expose the fact that one 'has no clothes'? The French are unlikely to take the government move against their comedian lightly.

One writer whose life experiences and the insights gained from these afford valuable encouragement for revisionists in a dark time is the German theologian, hero and martyr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945). This German Lutheran wrote a remarkable essay at the turn of the years 1942-43 entitled "After Ten Years."^[6] The title derives from the ten years of Nazi rule his nation had endured. The essay, composed out of the crucible of personal suffering under a formidable tyranny, contains a succinct analysis of why such structures of oppression will always sooner or later be brought down.

Bonhoeffer noted that there was "so little ground under our feet" and immediately affirmed that "we are able to wait for the success of our cause in quietness and confidence." How did he derive his assurance? After all, his own future was to be executed by the regime a few days before its final collapse.

Bonhoeffer was a man of faith. That does not mean a man of wishful thinking. In the pregnant section "Who stands his ground?" he observed that "the Disposer of history is always bringing good out of evil over the heads of the history-makers." Men of responsibility, he added, can rely on "the rising generation", which "will always instinctively discern" whether its elders are acting out of concrete responsibility or evasive reliance on "abstract principle." Moreover, he stated that "malice always contains the seeds of its own destruction, for it always makes men uncomfortable, if nothing worse."

He recognized that human folly, something more common in "individuals or groups who are inclined or condemned to sociability", is a very difficult obstacle to overcome. One thinks here of those who routinely dismiss Holocaust revisionism as crankery or neo-Nazism without examining it. Folly, Bonhoeffer declared, cannot be dealt with successfully by reason or protests or threats, but is self-complacent and can become dangerously aggressive when pressed.

However, he saw reasons for hope. "There is no reason for us to think that the majority of men are fools under all circumstances. What matters... is whether our rulers hope to gain more... from men's independence of judgement and their shrewdness of mind." Also, writing at the turning point of a war which, up till then, the Nazis appeared to be winning, he wrote: "It is one of the most astounding discoveries, but one of the most incontrovertible, that evil – often in a surprisingly short time – proves

its own folly and defeats its own object.” He quoted the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah: “Houses and fields and vineyards shall yet again be bought in this land!” – an utterance made just as the holy city of Jerusalem was about to be destroyed.^[7]

Bonhoeffer was confident that human nobility never disappears from the human race. “Nobility,” he explained, “springs from and thrives on self-sacrifice and courage and an unfailing sense of duty to oneself and society..... It demands a recovery of the lost sense of quality.” He believed that the world is so structured that “a profound respect for the absolute human laws and human rights is also the best means of self-preservation.” Wiser heads among the Jewish people are already seeing this in our context. In Australia recently the Jewish activist and former editor of Melbourne’s *The Age* newspaper, Michael Gawenda, was reported as saying that, while he hated Holocaust revisionism, he was no longer convinced that repressing it was the right way to go.

Bonhoeffer warned that the struggle cannot be expected to be easy or pleasant: “I believe that God both can and will bring good out of evil..... I believe God will give us all the power we need to resist in all time of distress. But he never gives it in advance.”

George Orwell’s essay, “The Prevention of Literature”^[8] also casts light on the present situation of revisionists and offers hope for the future. Here Orwell uttered a powerful defense of genuine free speech and associated its existence with the production of quality literature, as opposed to writing that is mediocre, trite and stereotyped. At the time he wrote (1945), Orwell was preoccupied with threats to liberty from communist totalitarianism, from Catholic authoritarianism, from financial monopoly and from rampant bureaucracy; but his thesis can be relevantly updated to apply to the current persecution of revisionists.

Truth was all-important for him. “What is really at issue is the right to report contemporary events truthfully.” (We can add past events as well.) “The enemies of intellectual liberty,” he continued, “always try to present their case as a plea for discipline versus individualism. The issue truth-versus-untruth is as far as possible kept in the background.” Promoters of the Holocaust do not pin their cases on “discipline”, but on chimeras such as “respect for the memory of the dead” and “respect for the feelings of Holocaust survivors.” The upshot is the same.

Referring to the Catholic and the communist, Orwell noted that “each of them tacitly claims that “the truth” has already been revealed, and that the heretic, if he is not simply a fool, is secretly aware of “the truth” and merely resists it out of selfish motives.” Just so, at the present times, defenders of “Holocaust orthodoxy” insist that their position is “beyond debate” and resort to *ad hominem* arguments of various kinds, such as accusations that revisionists are anti-Semites or neo-Nazis.

Orwell was fearful that “the poisonous effect of the Russian *mythos*” made it “doubtful whether a true history of our times can ever be written.” He would have had to admit that he was too pessimistic if he had lived to see the comprehensive exposure of communist totalitarianism during the next sixty years by Alexandr Solzhenitsyn and many others. No doubt some details have been permanently lost, just as some evidence for Holocaust revisionism may be, but enough remains and is on the public record for future defenders of revisionists to celebrate and build upon their achievements.

Orwell was also worried that “the weakening of the desire for liberty among the intellectuals themselves” did not augur well for human liberty; but again he was too pessimistic. Just to cite one

contemporary example, there is a strong movement in Australia as I write (January 2014) for the repeal of “racial vilification” legislation that is seen as an unjust limitation of free speech. Many commentators include the repeal of “racial hatred” sanctions as being also necessary. A few years ago a petition defending a French historical revisionist^[9] was circulated worldwide and signed by a huge number of persons from many different countries. There is good reason to feel that the human hunger for liberty will be more than a match, ultimately, for those seeking to close down open commentary on the Nazi period and other topics.

Another powerful element in human nature is the desire of creative writers in all literary genres to produce original and strikingly beautiful language. The best of the world's literature has set the benchmark. Orwell noted that in his time “political writing consists almost entirely of prefabricated phrases bolted together like the pieces of a child's Meccano set.” He added that “to write in plain, vigorous language one has to think fearlessly, and if one thinks fearlessly one cannot be politically orthodox” (by which he means “politically correct”). At the present time the later works of Solzhenitsyn^[10] appear to have been prevented by *force majeure* from appearing in English translation, though a cooperative venture is in play on the Internet to get around this censorship. The widespread and innate love of quality literature and quality writing is also in the middle and long term likely to prove more than a match for those seeking to suppress the findings of revisionism.

Solzhenitsyn also believed that literature can and will protect human liberty and the right of free discussion in public forums of contentious topics. He saw literature as a profound vehicle of truth. “But a work of art bears within itself its own verification; conceptions which are devised or stretched do not stand being portrayed in images, they all come crashing down, appear sickly and pale, convince no one. But those works of art which have scooped up the truth and presented it to us as a living force – they take hold of us, and nobody ever, not even in ages to come, will appear to refute them.”^[11]

The great Russian novelist saw literature as protecting the souls of nations. “But woe to that nation whose literature is disturbed by the intervention of power..... it is the closing down of the heart of the nation, a slashing to pieces of its memory. The nation ceases to be mindful of itself, it is deprived of its spiritual unity.” The suppression of literature and of historical debate are crimes against humanity. “In some cases moreover – when as a result of such a silence the whole of history ceases to be understood in its entirety – it is a danger to the whole of mankind.”

Solzhenitsyn warned of “a rampant danger: the suppression of information between the parts of the planet.” He also warned against reliance on the United Nations Organization, which, of course, has, since his time, sided with the oppressors of Holocaust revisionism. He saw the UNO as “a United Governments Organization” which has betrayed many peoples subject to governments which they have not chosen.

Rather in the spirit of Faurisson and Widmann, the Nobel laureate asked: “Is it not natural for us to step back, to lose faith in the steadfastness of goodness, in the indivisibility of truth?” His answer was that world literature, which he saw as “a certain common body and a common spirit, a living heartfelt unity reflecting the growing unity of mankind”, has the power “to help mankind, in these its troubled hours, to see itself as it really is, notwithstanding the indoctrinations of prejudiced people and parties.”

Solzhenitsyn was alert to the skepticism that his idealistic affirmation might bring in some quarters. “We shall be asked, what can literature possibly do against the ruthless onslaught of open violence? But let

us not forget that violence does not live alone and is not capable of living alone; it is necessarily interwoven with falsehood.” He celebrated the courage of those who refuse to partake in false statements and actions (the exact position, of course, of Faurisson and many other revisionists). “In the struggle with falsehood art always did win and it always does win..... Falsehood can hold out against much in this world, but not against art. And no sooner will falsehood be dispersed than the nakedness of violence will be revealed in all its ugliness – and violence, decrepit, will fall.”

It is only a matter of time before a creative writer of the first rank, in world terms, comes forth to deal with the extraordinary scandal of the persecution of revisionists that has deformed and degraded Western European culture since the end of World War Two. And sooner or later the whole apparatus of suppression will go on the nose and then collapse.

Charles Morgan expressed a similar confidence in his magnificent defense of freedom, *Liberties of the Mind*.^[12] Partly as a result of considering the Soviet show trials under Stalin, Morgan had become worried that the liberty of thought itself (as distinct from the liberty of expression) was in danger. He regarded the enemy as materialistic-minded totalitarians holding a view of man as a mechanical organism rather than a spiritual creature of divine will. He noted that such folk had not yet in the West “the power to make it criminal to demonstrate the falsity of their premises.”^[13] He thought that any attempt to obliterate conscience would fail, so long as “the Gospels and Milton and Bunyan remain accessible, and men are free to pray and love.”^[14]

Morgan believed that a restoration of liberty was likely to occur in the future. “Nevertheless the time may come – the time may already have come – when the Western nations must vindicate their own principle of freedom and, together and severally, set their house in order..... they may have, by... repeal and codification at home, to undo harm already done..... It is time that liberty rebuilt her barricades.”^[15] He affirmed that “the people themselves... must impose constitutional checks upon their own absolutism..... they must disengage the liberty of thought as a distinct and inalienable liberty..... [and do so] by positive laws to prevent not only the intimidation of minorities, but subversive intimidation by minorities.”^[16] He was not thinking of the struggle against the suppression of revisionism, but his words are highly relevant to that, even prophetic. And it was art that Morgan saw as the force that would frustrate the mind-controllers. “It is the radical principle and the invariable practice of all totalitarian systems to freeze imagination. It is the radical principle of art to enable men and women to think and imagine for themselves.”^[17] Art is on the side of revisionists in 2014! “If art has anything to teach, it is... that to mistake one supposed aspect of truth for Truth itself and so to imprison men's curiosity and aspiration in the dungeon of an ideology, is the unforgivable sin against the spirit of man. An artist is bound by his vocation to recognise as sin the authoritarian's claim to be a monopolist of truth.”^[18]

In summary, Solzhenitsyn, Orwell and Morgan make the same point: art (including literature) is an amazingly strong ally of those who fight for intellectual freedom. For this reason I believe that Holocaust revisionism will eventually win the day, no matter what vicissitudes occur on the way. Today, as I finish this article (11 January), the news has reached us of the French government-led banning of the comedy show in Nantes of the comedian M'Bala M'Bala Dieudonne. I predict that this will prove a pyrrhic victory for the suppressors. When a national government has to utilize the highest administrative court to close down a comedian's show, then “something is very rotten in the state” indeed – and the odor will awaken more and more people.

In the meantime, some of us may have to suffer. We should recall the spirit of Job (“The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!” [19]) and the words of Sister Beatrix to Rowena Darcy in the great Australian novel *The Harp in the South*: [20] “God has his own ways of giving us experience, Rowena. Don't regret all the pain you have suffered. You will learn in the long run that it gave you wisdom of strength. Lift up your heart, as Father says in the Mass, and be glad that God thought you worthy to go through this trial for his sake and your own.”

Notes:

- [1] Richard Widmann, “History Behind Bars: a Future of Revisionism,” *Inconvenient History* Vol. 5, No. 4, Winter 2013.
Online: http://inconvenienthistory.com/archive/2013/volume_5/number_4/history_behind_bars.php
- [2] Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, “One Word of Truth”, (UK: The Bodley Head, 1971).
- [3] The Gospel of John, 16:33.
- [4] The Gospel of John, 18:38. See “On Truth” in *Francis Bacon’s Essays* (UK, Everyman, 1906, repr. 1958).
- [5] Charles Morgan, *The Voyage* (London: Macmillan, 1940, repr. London: Capuchin Classics, 2009).
- [6] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (UK: SCM Press, 1953, repr. Fontana Books, 1959).
- [7] Jeremiah, 32:15.
- [8] George Orwell, “The Prevention of Literature”, in *Inside the Whale and Other Essays* (London: Penguin Books, 1957, repr. 1964), pp. 159-174.
- [9] This was the “Petition for the Abrogation of the Gayssot law and the liberation of Vincent Reynouard” organized by Paul-Eric Blanrue in October 2010.
- [10] Alexandr Solzhenitsyn. Volumes 3 and 4 of *The Red Wheel and Two Hundred Years of Living Together* (A detailed study of the relations of Russians and Jews over the past two centuries).
- [11] These and the immediately following quotations come from “One Word of Truth.”
- [12] Charles Morgan, *Liberties of the Mind* (London: Macmillan, 1951).
- [13] Morgan, *Voyage*, Op. cit., p. 51.
- [14] *Ibid*, p. 52.

- [15] Ibid, pp. 68, 77.
- [16] Ibid, pp. 79-80.
- [17] Ibid, p. 86.
- [18] Ibid, p. 91.
- [19] The Book of Job, 1:21.
- [20] Ruth Park, *The Harp in the South* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1948, repr. Australia: Penguin Books, 1951), Chapter XI, p. 146.

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